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History of the Department of Internal Medicine

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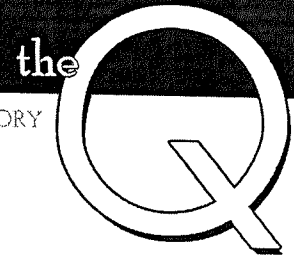
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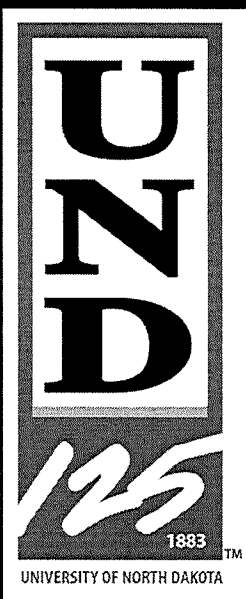
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UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA :: QUASQUICENTENNIAL :: DEPARTMENT HISTORY



UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
1883-2008
CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNAL MEDICINE



By:
Barb Schuetz, Reed T. Keller, MD,
William P. Newman, MD

HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL MEDICINE

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Background

The University of North Dakota School of Medicine was established by the State of North Dakota in 1905. At that time no thought was given to the formation or function of the Department of Internal Medicine. One practitioner, Dr. August Eggers, was the only faculty member listed as a lecturer in Physical Diagnosis. Being a hearty soul, he continued to teach this class, apparently alone, for the next 25 years. In 1930, Dr. J. H. Hetherington relieved Dr. Eggers as the lecturer in Physical Diagnosis.

The first appointment as lecturer in Internal Medicine was given to Dr. W. H. Witherstone in 1930, who was the first to initiate a course in clinical medicine. In 1933 Dr. Harry Benwell, a community practitioner, became appointed to the faculty as a lecturer in Physical Diagnosis. In 1938, Dr. Benwell accepted the responsibilities for the surgical lectures and Dr. Westmoreland became the Physical Diagnosis lecturer. Subsequently, additional lecturers such as Dr. Rich, Dr. Dailey, and Dr. R. Goehl were added to the clinical faculty. Dr. E. A. Haunz, who was later to become Chairman of the Department, was added as clinical lecturer in 1948.

In 1952, a formal Department of Internal Medicine was organized. At that time there were nine Clinical Associates in Internal Medicine and an Associate Professor of Psychiatry. The Department's responsibility had expanded to include Physical Diagnosis, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics, Pediatrics, and Psychopathology.

In 1954, a community physician, Dr. R. Goehl was appointed the first part-time head of Medicine. A three-week clinical clerkship was initiated to prepare the students for transfers to other medical schools. By 1956 the Department of Obstetrics was established and the Department of Medicine was relieved of teaching the students the basic principles of care of the pregnant female. In 1962 Dr. E. A. Haunz was appointed Chairman of the Department of Medicine. He continued in this position for eleven years until the Medical School expanded into a four-year degree granting institution.

Tremendous change for the Department of Medicine occurred in 1973. The North Dakota State Legislature had directed the School of Medicine to expand to offer the four-year degree. The first two years were to be completed in the Grand Forks area, the third year clerkship would be offered at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine and the fourth year would be completed in the various community hospitals throughout the State of North Dakota.

The first full-time Chairman of the Department, Dr. Reed Keller, a North Dakota native, joined the Department in October 1973. By 1974, the first full-time positions had been recruited by the Fargo Veterans Administration Hospital in conjunction with the Department of Medicine. Drs. Fred Hofeldt, Larry Pelletier, John Thompson, and Ms. Osama El-Arini were the first four full-time faculty members recruited into the new department.

The Internal Medicine Residency

The Internal Medicine Residency Program received approval from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education in 1975 and the first few residents were initiated in their three-year clinical training program in Fargo.

The initial program director was Dr. Lawrence Pelletier (1975-1979). The 1980's saw a succession of program directors with Drs. Reed Keller ('79), Gary Lattimer ('80 - '81), Robert Tight ('81 - '82) and Roald Nelson ('82 - '91). In the early 1990's Dr. Anthony Gustafson arrived as program director. Initially the residency used MeritCare (then St. Lukes Hospital), Fargo Veterans Medical Center, and Dakota Hospital as co-equal training-site partners. As the practice of medicine changed dramatically in the early 1990's, the VA played a progressively more important role as the clinical teaching venue. In the mid 1990's, Internal Medicine residencies changed to a more primary care perspective from the prior sub-specialty oriented focus. With the need for a broader patient population, the VA could no longer remain the primary internal medicine teaching location.

A major change in residency teaching location occurred when Dr. Charles Foulks arrived as chairman in 1996. He effected a rapid change in the Internal Medicine residency teaching sites with a majority of the clinical teaching moving from the VA to MeritCare Health systems. Since then, the IM residency's relationship with MeritCare Health systems has continued to grow. However, the VA still remains a vital teaching partner in the Internal Medicine residency.

Since 1996, the IM program directors have been Drs. Charles Foulks ('96 - '97), James Hanley ('97 - '02), Raymond Smego, Jr. ('02 - '03), William Newman ('03 - '04), and David Theige (the current program director).

Since 1975, over 275 residents have completed the program, many remaining regionally to practice primary care internal medicine. Others have continued their training in sub-specialties and now practice throughout the region and nation.

Student Teaching

Student teaching has always been an essential element of the Internal Medicine Department's mission. Full-time and clinical faculty members lecture in such pre-clinical courses as Physiology, Microbiology, Pharmacology, Pathology, Physical Diagnosis, and Introduction to Clinical Medicine. With the inception of the new curriculum in 1998, internal medicine faculty, have added block facilitation and case wrap-up clinician to their teaching responsibilities.

With repatriation of the 3rd year students in 1983, the third-year clerkship began on the Fargo and Bismarck campuses, with Dr. Ann Buettner as Clerkship Director. The Grand Forks campus was added in 2002. Dr. David Theige assumed the Clerkship Director duties in 1992 followed by Dr. William Newman in 1996 (the current Clerkship Director). Over 1400 students have completed the Internal Medicine Clerkship.

The Department of Internal Medicine's elective offerings remain popular on all four campuses, with numerous students electing general and sub-specialty rotations. Each year at least one (often more) IM faculty are selected by campus students as the year's outstanding clinical teacher.

Research

Research and scholarly activity, although always considered an important element of faculty performance, has advanced rapidly in the preceding two years. In the late 1970's and early 1980's, clinician/researchers were hired to head sub-specialty divisions. Most of these individuals wrote grants and maintained active basic science research laboratories until the late 1980's. With the movement of internal medicine residencies to primary care in the late 1980's and early 1990's, departmental bench laboratory research languished. Most UND Internal Medicine faculty members then fulfilled their scholarly activity obligations with clinical research. In the mid 1990's the department research focus shifted to resident/faculty collaborative research. With the arrival of Dr. Raymond Smego as the Department Chair in 2003, a basic science research presence returned to the Department of Internal Medicine. Dr. Smego immediately recruited Dr. Thomas Santoro, a clinician/molecular biologist, as the Vice-Chairman for Research. Dr. Michiyo Tomita, a research scientist who works in Dr. Santoro's laboratory and Dr. Abe Sahmoun, a research epidemiologist, were also added to the Department. Fruitful research relationships between the USDA Human Nutrition laboratory, Fargo Veterans Medical Center and North Dakota State University continue.

The number of publications from the Department of Internal Medicine has risen from 12 in 1997 to 70 in 2003. Grant monies have increased from \$31,000 in 1997 to over \$370,000 in 2003.

The Internal Medicine Department continues to add clinical and basic science research faculty. Educational research for its Educator Scholar track faculty represents a new addition to the Department's research agenda.

Service and Administration

The Department's administration and service missions have remained strong under the leadership of its Chairs. After Dr. Reed Keller's long tenure ended with his untimely death in 1991, the Department has been in the capable hands of Drs. Tight ('91 – '92), Gray ('92 – '95), Foulks ('96 - '98), Hanley ('98 - '02), Smego ('02 – '03), and Newman (2003 - current). Our 25 full-time and 218 clinical faculty members are distributed throughout large and small communities in the State and region. They serve on most University of North Dakota School of Medicine & Health Sciences committees in numerous capacities. These full-time and clinical faculty provide continuing medical education in regional communities and in the State's medical facilities in addition to their roles as providers of clinical care. They serve as vital members of North Dakota advisory boards and perform other diverse roles requiring their expertise. The Internal Medicine Department currently employs six full and part-time support staff.

Summary

Throughout its over one hundred year existence and especially since the School's evolution into a degree granting institution, the Department of Internal Medicine has been a growing, vibrant part of the Medical School. We are confident that our teaching, research and clinical efforts over the years have significantly enriched student/resident education and beneficially impacted our patient's lives. We look forward to expanding our teaching, research, and clinical contributions.

09/28/04

Updated 11/15/07